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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
 DISTRICT OF OREGON  
 PORTLAND DIVISION

OREGON COUNCIL FOR THE  
 HUMANITIES d/b/a OREGON  
 HUMANITIES, a nonprofit corporation;  
 FEDERATION OF STATE HUMANITIES  
 COUNCILS, a nonprofit corporation,

Plaintiffs,

v.

UNITED STATES DOGE SERVICE, a  
 component of the Executive Office of the  
 President; AMY GLEASON, in her official  
 capacity as Acting Administrator of the  
 United States DOGE Service; NATIONAL  
 ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES,  
 an independent federal agency, and its  
 advisory council NATIONAL COUNCIL ON  
 THE HUMANITIES; MICHAEL  
 MCDONALD, in his official capacity as  
 Acting Chairman of the National Endowment  
 for the Humanities,

Defendants.

Civil No. 3:25-cv-00829-SI

**DECLARATION OF ADAM DAVIS IN  
 SUPPORT OF PLAINTIFFS' MOTION  
 FOR PRELIMINARY INJUNCTION**

I, Adam Davis, hereby declare under penalty of perjury as follows:

1. I am over the age of 18 and have personal knowledge of the facts herein and am competent to testify thereto.

2. I have been the executive director of Oregon Humanities since 2013 and directed the Center for Civic Reflection in Chicago before that. I currently sit on the boards of the High Desert Partnership, the Federation of State Humanities Councils, and the Cultural Advocacy Coalition of Oregon, as well as the advisory board of the North Star Civic Foundation. I received my PhD from the University of Chicago.

3. In 1971, Oregon created the Oregon Council for the Humanities, doing business as Oregon Humanities (“Oregon Humanities”), as a Section 501(c)(3) organization. We were created specifically to distribute NEH funds to public humanities projects in communities all over Oregon. The Governor of Oregon appoints up to 25% of the members to our board of directors. As such, we are funded by the NEH under 20 U.S.C. § 956(f)(2)(B). Oregon Humanities is a member of the Federation of State Humanities Councils. The NEH is Oregon Humanities’ largest funder and oldest partner.

4. Oregon Humanities’ mission is to connect people and communities through conversation, storytelling, and participatory programs to inspire understanding and collaborative change. One of our primary goals is to broaden participation in the public humanities and show how conversation and storytelling support robust democracy.

5. To be eligible for receipt of NEH funds, Oregon Humanities first must respond to a notice of funding opportunity by submitting an annual grant application and a plan, both of which follow certain criteria under the statutes. Our plans have consistently been approved by the NEH staff, the National Council on the Humanities, and the Chair of the NEH. Regular assessments of Oregon Humanities, including site visits by NEH staff and external reviewers, have been extremely positive.

6. Oregon Humanities has always applied for and been awarded general operating support grants through NEH. Most recently, we applied for and were approved for a general operating support grant that spans November 1, 2022, to October 31, 2027. An NEH Notice of Action approved \$2,580,205 in funding for this grant. The general operating support grants constitute approximately 50% of Oregon Humanities' budget each year. To date, NEH has awarded and reimbursed \$2,579,205 in funds under this particular grant. Additional funds should be available for this grant during Fiscal Year 2025 under the Full-Year Continuing Resolution, as all cultural institutions, including the NEH, were funded at current levels.

7. In response to a notice of funding opportunity put out by NEH, we submitted an application for a new general operating support grant for November 1, 2025, to October 31, 2030. That grant application has been received, but not yet been processed by NEH.

8. In early January 2025, we applied for funding through a second round of NEH's United We Stand special initiative and were notified on January 22, 2025, that we were awarded \$40,000 in grant funds. Those funds have already been expended by Oregon Humanities, but not reimbursed by NEH.

9. NEH dollars flowing through our council help fund humanities programming in every corner of the state—including grants for rural libraries in communities such as Burns, Joseph, Blue River, Newport, and Forest Grove; program funding for youth-led conversations about mental health in Medford and storytelling projects led by Nez Perce Wallowa Homeland; fellowships for emerging storytellers from Woodburn, Silverton, Seal Rock, Talent, and Cove; the publication of a widely-distributed *Oregon Humanities* magazine featuring stories from all over the state; the production of two audio programs, *The Detour* and *This Place*, that air on eight community radio stations and on podcast streaming platforms; community conversation programs held in libraries, cultural centers, and community colleges that generate healthy discourse, build trust and relationships across differences of background and belief, and

encourage engaged and active civic participation. Oregon Humanities also runs a free, credit-bearing course in the humanities for adults living at or near the poverty line.

10. Our 23-person board of directors come from a wide range of places and professional backgrounds that enable us to build relationships in Oregon communities and facilitate programs locally. Oregon Humanities relies on our board and other community partners to develop and deliver programs at an incredible value of only \$0.37 of federal dollars per Oregon resident.

11. On April 2, I received a grant termination notice via email. The email came from a non-governmental email address - Grant\_Notifications@nehemail.onmicrosoft.com. The email said: “Mr. Adam Davis, We regret to inform you that your NEH grant has been terminated. Please see the attached grant termination notice. With Regards, Michael McDonald, Acting Chairman, National Endowment for the Humanities.” The email attached a document called “Notice of Grant Termination” purportedly signed by Acting Director of NEH Michael McDonald. The termination letter was not hand-signed by McDonald or digitally signed with a verifiable digital signature. Instead, the signature on the termination letters was simply typed by someone as “/s/ Michael McDonald. The letter, attached with its accompanying email as Exhibit A, stated:

This letter provides notice that the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) is terminating your federal grant (Grant Application No. SO28986523) effective April 2, 2025, in accordance with the termination clause in your Grant Agreement.

Your grant no longer effectuates the agency’s needs and priorities and conditions of the Grant Agreement and is subject to termination due to several reasonable causes, as outlined in 2CFR§200.340. NEH has reasonable cause to terminate your grant in light of the fact that the NEH is repurposing its funding allocations in a new direction in furtherance of the President’s agenda. The President’s February 19, 2025 executive order mandates that the NEH eliminate all non-statutorily required activities and functions. See Commencing the Reduction of the Federal Bureaucracy, E.O. 14217 (Feb. 19, 2025). Your grant’s immediate termination is necessary to safeguard the interests of the federal government, including its fiscal

priorities. The termination of your grant represents an urgent priority for the administration, and due to exceptional circumstances, adherence to the traditional notification process is not possible. Therefore, the NEH hereby terminates your grant in its entirety effective April 2, 2025.

12. On April 30, 2025, we received an email from the NEH Office of Grant Management. The email stated that NEH terminated awards in 2025 and attached “*Guidance for Recipients of Terminated NEH Awards*.” The guidance provided a process for councils to submit for “termination costs” associated with terminated grants, defined as “those [costs] incurred as a direct result of termination and must be necessary and reasonable to ensure an orderly shut-down of award activities” as well as “closeout costs,” administrative costs associated with the closeout of a terminated award. The “Appeals” section of the guidance states “NEH is not offering a means of dispute resolution.” A true and correct copy of this email is attached as Exhibit B.

13. On June 2, I received an email from Karen Kenton subject matter “FY25 GOS Awards: terminations have been rescinded up to 20 percent.” The email stated: “I write with an important message: NEH has rescinded the termination of the fiscal year 2025 General Operating Support (GOS) grants. For fiscal year 2025, the agency is funding the humanities councils at 20 percent of its appropriation of program funds, which is the minimum that NEH is congressionally mandated to award to our state and jurisdictional humanities council partners [20 U.S. Code § 960 - Authorization of appropriations, 1 B]. Starting today and over the next few days, please check eGMS for official notification.” It also said, “I realize the reduction in funds from 40 percent to 20 percent **still represents an incredible hardship**.” (emphasis added). A true and correct copy of this email is attached as Exhibit C.

14. Later on June 2, I received an email from the Office of Grant Management with the subject matter “Reinstatement of SO-289865-23, effective immediately.” The email stated: “Please see the attached letter rescinding the termination of SO-289865-23 to the Oregon Council for the Humanities.” The attached letter states that “Any costs incurred between April 2, 2025, and the date of this letter will be permitted as a cost incurred within the award period of

performance. For fiscal year 2025, the agency is funding at a 20 percent allocation, which is the minimum that NEH is congressionally mandated to award to its state and jurisdictional humanities council partners [20 U.S. Code § 960 - Authorization of appropriations, 1 B]. NEH will issue a partial award to bring your council's fiscal year 2025 GOS grant allocation to the full 20 percent minimum." A true and correct copy of this letter is attached as Exhibit D.

15. While this partial reinstatement of our award allowed us to receive some funds for activities completed over the last several months, it comes after significant disruptions to staffing, operations, and programs, and we continue to proceed with caution amid this prolonged state of uncertainty. We believe we have enough funds to get through our October 2025 operations, but the future of the council is in doubt beyond that date.

16. It is hard to describe the turmoil caused by the actions taken by DOGE and NEH over the last few months. We immediately had to cancel plans to distribute public program grants to organizations statewide that had already applied and were about to be awarded funds. We paused programs we had planned with small and rural communities in Central Oregon, including programs in Spanish. We canceled our free summer course for youth to earn college credit in partnership with a Portland nonprofit and cancelled several facilitation training workshops. We also laid off three staff members and lost one staff position to attrition with no plans to rehire. We also reduced all remaining staff's hours to 50-80% and reduced benefits. The remaining ten staff are, as of June 16, 2025, back to full time, though with less capacity to develop and execute programs and partnerships that have been so central to our operational model for many years.

17. Of particular significance, Oregon Humanities is itself a grant-making organization. Our grant program awards funding for humanities programs and events hosted by nonprofit organizations, federally recognized North American tribes, and rural-serving public libraries in Oregon. In 2024, we awarded \$148,012 in grants. For 2025, we were budgeted to award \$175,000 in grants. When NEH delivered its termination notice, we were forced to stop

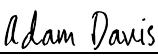
all grant-making activities. We know of at least ten small Oregon organizations that requested 2025 funding from Oregon Humanities that we had funded in prior years. Those organizations include Conexión Fénix in Otis, Corvallis Multicultural Library, KXCJ-LP in Cave Junction, Natives of One Wind Indigenous Alliance/Red Earth Descendants in Ashland, Vanport Mosaic in Portland, and Wallowa Land Trust in Enterprise.

18. These and other small community groups around the state rely on Oregon Humanities as a funder and partner. Some small community groups receiving “minigrants” from Oregon Humanities often have no other source of grant funds. They look to Oregon Humanities as a rare source of local funding.

19. For decades, Oregon Humanities has fully embraced its role as the Oregon affiliate of the NEH. We have striven to serve as a bridge between the federal government and local communities throughout Oregon, creating opportunities for Oregonians to explore challenging, necessary topics through community conversations, distributing funds so that small and mid-sized organizations can create their own, locally-driven programs, and generally building a larger, more robust and participatory cultural network in the state and country. Oregonians have come to depend on these resources, and we have been honored to do everything we can to live up to their expectations. Consistent, transparent, reliable funding from NEH to our state humanities council has been essential to our efforts to provide partners and grantees around the state with similarly consistent, transparent, and reliable financial support and program partnership. And now, our organization is in true peril.

**Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1746, I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.**

DATED this 25th day of June 2025.

  
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Adam Davis

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